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Series S, Rural Sociology

MIGRATION MOTIVATIONS FOR POPULATION TURNAROUND IN NONMETROPOLITAN AREAS*

by

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March 1978 No. 78 S-4

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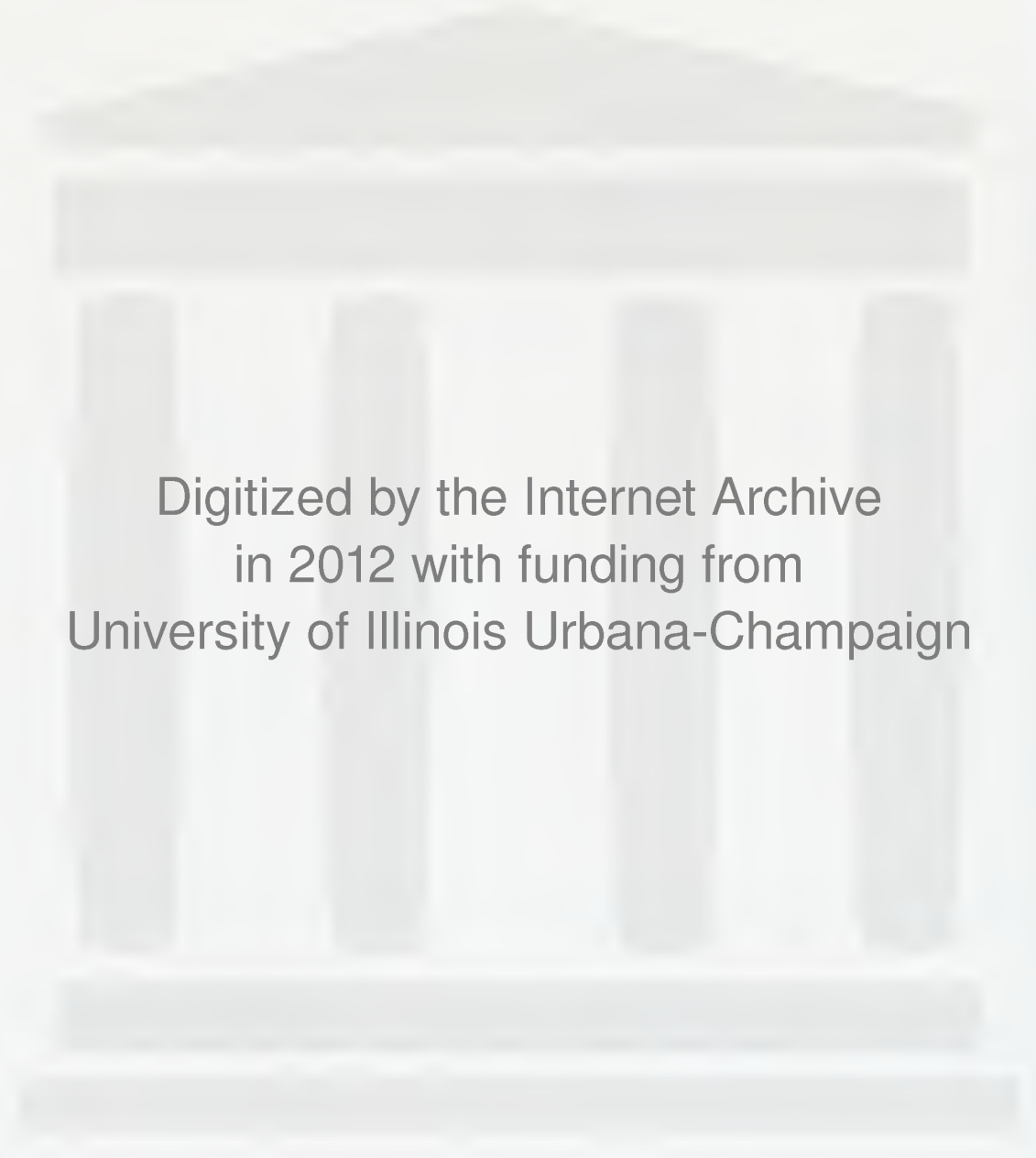

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MIGRATION MOTIVATIONS FOR POPULATION TURNAROUND IN NONMETROPOLITAN AREAS

Abstract

Data from a 1977 survey of metropolitan and nonmetropolitan households migrating to 75 high growth counties of the Midwest are examined to consider the motivational basis for post-1970 inmigration. Findings suggest that the major motivations for leaving places of origin, especially among those from metro areas, are quality of life considerations. About a fourth of the metro migrants' and half of the nonmetro migrants' reasons are job-related. Anti-urban push and pro-rural pull responses are prevalent among metro migrants. Subsequent analysis of reasons for leaving metro residences suggests consistency with other objective variables. Among households with working-age heads, those leaving for quality of life reasons came disproportionately from the largest metropolitan centers and went to the smallest towns. Those moving for non-employment reasons are not more likely to have taken an initial income loss, though they are less likely to experience immediate income gains.

MIGRATION MOTIVATIONS FOR POPULATION TURNAROUND IN NONMETROPOLITAN AREAS

Research on internal migration has emphasized the importance of economic forces on the volume and direction of population movement. Ample documentation exists for intermetropolitan and rural-urban migration streams to suggest that income and employment opportunities are the basic stimuli for a majority of long-distance moves. With the recent population reversal, however, there has been a reassessment of explanations for migration and for destination selection, at least for the growing metro-nonmetro stream. Since much of this new stream is composed of groups for which employment reasons aren't particularly obvious, and is directed toward destination areas presumed to be rich in quality-of-life amenities, there is speculation that the employment-related factor has diminished as an influence in migration, at least for the new urban-to-rural streams.

The present research is an examination of motivations for migrating and of the criteria for destination selection among recent migrants to nonmetropolitan areas. A reason analysis is undertaken using survey data obtained from interviews with recent migrants to high net inmigration, nonmetropolitan counties in the North Central Region. The research assesses the relative importance of employment, site characteristics, and social, familial, and other considerations in deciding to leave areas of origin and as criteria for selecting a particular nonmetropolitan destination. This examination of reasons, and comparisons which are made, provide useful insights into the motivational basis of "population turnaround," and raise questions about the generalizability of the prevailing mode for explaining migration.

Background

The prevailing view in migration research is that economic and particularly employment-related motivations underlie most long-distance migrations.[1/] This perspective has been reinforced by secondary data analyses of attributes of areas of origin and destination as predictors of in- and outmigration, by inferences based on analyses of the composition of migration streams, and by the direct examination of reasons for moving provided by migrants in primary surveys.

Secondary data analyses have focused on structural characteristics of origins and destinations, and these have served as the basis for inferring migrant motivations. Prospective migrants have been shown to respond to the economic conditions of areas, including growth and decline in employment, wage rates, and levels of unemployment (see, for example, Alperovich, et al., 1977). In general, these explanatory or predictive factors are meant to apply to persons in the labor force, and thus tend to ignore the migration of non-labor force persons.[2/] The relative availability of secondary economic and particularly employment data for a variety of areal units, may have helped shape the view of man as a maximizer of economic wants and led to the conclusion the "economic motivations do appear to be a major causative factor in the migration process" (Shaw, 1975:57).

While economists and other proponents of labor migration models argue over the operationalization and intricacies of their models, foundational propositions about human migration behavior are fairly ubiquitous. The labor force participant is seen as "rationally" evaluating alternative

courses of action, including whether or not to migrate, and if so, to where. Being economically rational, it is argued that the individual views the decision to migrate as an investment in future income or job benefits which outweigh the costs of moving. As Shaw suggests in summarizing this perspective, "if no unique costs (subjective or objective) are associated with employment in either i or j and no costs of movement or barriers exist between them, a maximizing worker will elect to offer his labor in the market with the higher wage rate" (1975:55). Aggregating these individual decision functions, economists have sought in ecological analyses to demonstrate the effectiveness of migration in equilibrating regional labor supply and demand.

Data on the composition of migration streams, and patterns of selectivity by such variables as age, education and skill level, have also been interpreted within this general economic model. The young, the more highly educated, and the highly skilled are more prone to migrate for the presumed reasons that they have a longer opportunity span over which returns to the migration investment may accrue, have more awareness or are better able to rationally use information on alternative opportunities, or experience a greater demand for their skills, which are in relatively short supply.

While a bias may be involved in inferring motives from secondary data and from the composition of migrant streams, survey data have reinforced the view that employment considerations are the basic stimuli in the migration process. In past surveys of migrants, a majority of respondents have consistently cited work-related reasons for moving (Shaw, 1975; Lansing and Mueller, 1967; Masnick, 1968; Ritchie, 1976; Price and Sikes,

1975). The residual response categories suggest that housing problems, particularly in studies of mobility within housing or labor markets, and changes in marital or family status, are also somewhat important, but generally do not predominate. Though there are inconsistencies in sampling framework, and differences in categorization schemes, previous surveys of reasons for migration have clearly emphasized the role of jobs and job changes as the single best descriptor of motivations for longer distance moves.

Noneconomic explanations have not been ignored in past research. Residential and environmental amenities, including climate, social ties, and various cultural "pull" factors, though, have almost always receded in importance when viewed against the evidence for the importance of income and employment factors.[3/]

The recent renewal of population growth in some rural areas, however, has called attention to possible limitations of economic interpretations, at least for the newly emerging metro-nonmetro migration stream, and forced a reassessment of explanations for moving and selecting destination areas. The impetus for this reassessment has been provided by data from residential preference surveys, secondary data examinations of high inmigration areas, and, more recently, from surveys of individuals moving in a nonmetropolitan direction.

The New Migration

For the past several years population estimates have consistently documented a trend which has been referred to as the "new migration," (Morrison, 1972), or the "demographic revival of nonmetropolitan territory." Outmigration from metropolitan areas currently exceeds migration to metropolitan areas, and nonmetropolitan areas are, overall, now growing

faster than metropolitan. Increasingly, the evidence suggests that the trend is real, relatively widespread, and not confined to areas surrounding metropolitan centers (DeJong and Sell, 1977).

A variety of explanations has been advanced to account for this "rural renaissance," ranging from traditional economic-employment explanations to explanations based on disenchantment with big-city life. To date, research evidence exists to suggest that each of the following is at least partially involved in the new migration patterns: (1) employment growth resulting from industrial decentralization; (2) super-suburbanization resulting from transportation improvements; (3) the movement of urban elderly to rural retirement areas; (4) the development of rural recreation areas and industries; (5) opportunities for higher education in nonmetropolitan areas; and (6) changing residential preferences and preferences for amenities located in more rural areas (DeJong, 1977; Fuguitt and Beale, 1976; Zuiches and Fuguitt, 1976; Beale, 1975; Morrison and Wheeler, 1976; Carpenter, 1976).

County level analyses show that many areas oriented toward recreation, retirement, and environmental amenities are experiencing high net inmigration rates. Data on the characteristics of metro-nonmetro migrants also support the contention that the "usual emphasis on economic determinants of migration may be less applicable for this migration stream" (DeJong and Humphrey, 1976:536). And, although the evidence for the actualization of residential preferences is ambiguous, there is some basis for inferring at least a partial congruence between intentions to move and preferences for less urbanized living, and actual moves (Zuiches and Fuguitt, 1976; Butler, et al, 1964; see also DeJong and Sell, 1977). At the very least there is an overall congruence between preferences and net migration patterns (Svart, 1976).

The evidence that nonemployment-related site considerations may be assuming a larger role in the current nonmetropolitan growth has tentatively been placed into the context of the structural changes occurring in American society, and in industrialized societies in general.[4/] The hypothesis, as stated by Shaw (1975:101), is that:

> It may be that as an economy progresses toward an urban-industrialized state, the role of pecuniary considerations (and certainly situations of economic stress) decline in importance as motives to migrate.

As a result of these processes, and particularly of rising affluence and higher standards of living, we may be witnessing an increasing "floating population" (Morrison and Wheeler, 1976) which can settle where it pleases, and which can act upon its desires. This pool of relatively unconstrained, voluntary migrants, forms the migration potential which, in interaction with quality of life-related place utilities, may provide key elements of the explanation for the migrational revival of certain areas of nonmetropolitan America.

Extant research thus seems to be converging toward a perspective nicely articulated by Goldstein who argues that the emerging trend demonstrates that a new "emphasis on quality of life as opposed to more strictly economic considerations seems to be assuming increasing importance as a motivation both in the decision to move and in the choice of residence" (1976).

A major challenge facing current research is to demonstrate the distinctiveness of the growing metro-nonmetro migration stream. Are the motivations of these migrants actually at variance with the dominant economic models? If so, is that distinctiveness due to the composition of

the stream, which may be composed of significant numbers of persons for whom labor-force models were never meant to apply, such as the elderly, or are noneconomic considerations important even among those for whom labor-force models are intended?

Research Objectives

The overall objective of the present research is to examine, in light of existing migration research and in comparison with a group of nonmetropolitan migrants, the relative importance of types of reasons metropolitan to nonmetropolitan migrants give for leaving the former residence and for choosing the particular area of destination. This operational distinction between the leaving and destination selection decisions is consistent with current research on migration decisionmaking (Roseman, 1977). To establish whether there is any uniqueness to the response patterns of metropolitan migrants, their responses will be compared with responses of migrants who have recently moved into the same target region from other nonmetropolitan areas. The major hypothesis of this research is that if metro-nonmetro migration is in some part a function of disamenities in larger urban areas, or longings for amenities in more rural areas, then such reasons should be more evident in the reason structure of migrants from metropolitan areas than of migrants from other nonmetropolitan areas. Since the sample areas are to a considerable degree amenity areas, we would not anticipate a reason structure for migrants from nonmetropolitan areas which is devoid of quality of life considerations. To discount the possibility that the results of the reason analysis are an artifact of the composition of the samples, separate analyses will be conducted for the portions of the samples that are of labor-force age. Finally, we will attempt to validate the

findings by examining some of the presumed logical concomitants of the observed response pattern.

Sampling Methodology and Survey Techniques

Since telephone interviewing was the intended mode of contact, decisions were made to limit the geographical scope of the survey and to match phone directories in an attempt to facilitate contacting potential migrants. Sampling and directory matching, as well as the subsequent interviewing and data reduction were carried out by the Survey Research Laboratory of the University of Illinois.

As of November, 1975, there were 866 nonmetropolitan counties in the 12 state North Central Region. On the basis of estimates published yearly by the Bureau of the Census, we identified and selected 75 high net inmigration target counties which had greater than 10 percent net migration between 1970 and 1975. This target group contained no counties in Iowa or Kansas, while Missouri and Michigan accounted for 24 and 21 counties, respectively. An examination of county data has revealed that the target counties are by no means homogeneous with regard to factors suggested to be important to the recent trends toward migration growth in nonmetropolitan counties. There is considerable variability among the counties on such indicators as population change, net migration in the previous decade, changes in the farm population, proportions employed in the various industrial sectors, and proportions working outside the county of residence. Forty-eight of the counties contained no urban place in 1970, and 25 of the counties were adjacent to an SMSA in 1975.

Within these high inmigration counties a survey population of 316,430 households with telephones was estimated from 1975 census estimates of households and 1970 estimates of telephone coverage for the target counties.

For each county, all telephone exchange areas were identified and the most recent directories (1976 or 1977) were obtained. From these directories a systematic sample of 11,329 households was drawn using a sampling interval of 1/28. The sources of bias are those normally associated with telephone surveys: households without telephones or with unlisted numbers.[5/]

To maximize the probability of obtaining an inmigrant on any given call, the sample names, addresses and phone numbers were matched with the appropriate 1970 telephone directory. This matching, performed at the Library of Congress, yielded two strata: (1) expected resident (matched) households, and (2) expected inmigrant (unmatched) households. Problems arising with common surnames, intra-county migrants, and redistricting of telephone exchange areas were handled by treating all ambiguous cases as unmatched and were placed in the expected migrant stratum.

Within the survey population of households, three strata were identified for subsequent disproportionately stratified sampling: (1) continuous residents of the counties since April, 1970; (2) inmigrants since April, 1970, who had moved from an SMSA county; and (3) inmigrants since April, 1970, who had moved from a non-SMSA county. Resident status and migrant type were determined from a series of initial screening questions. The various selection rules and probabilities of selection yielded interviews with 500 metropolitan migrants and 208 interviews with nonmetropolitan migrants. The resident stratum is not used in this analysis.

Heads of households were the primary target group, though spouses were interviewed after several unsuccessful attempts at contacting the head. Only persons reporting the current location as their usual place of

residence were interviewed and thus seasonal residents were excluded. Return migrants (out and back in) during the 1970-1977 interval are also excluded from the analysis.

The refusal rate on the screening section was 3.7 percent, and on the main interview it was 9 percent for the metro migrants and 3 percent for the nonmetro. Interviewing was conducted in the spring and early summer of 1977. Interviews lasted from 30 to 50 minutes and interviewers reported that respondents generally were very cooperative.

For the questions pertaining to reasons for leaving the area of origin and selecting the destination, open-ended responses were recorded verbatim and later coded into an initial 62 category scheme allowing for considerable specificity of responses. In order to insure reliable results, the coding of all "reasons" questions was performed independently three times.

In the subsequent analysis, difference of proportions significance tests are used to compare across migrant strata. The results of these tests have been obtained from appropriately weighting the disproportionate strata and then carrying out computations. Weighting for the proper proportional adjustment of the migrant strata alters the metro:nonmetro odds from the interviewed ratio of about 5:2 to an estimated 4:3.

RESULTS

Analysis of Reasons

In migration research, motives have been assessed directly by asking individuals why they moved, and, indirectly, by inferring motives from individual and household characteristics and from contextual factors. Problems are associated with both approaches. Inferences from indirect

evidence involve a denial of differential perceptions and evaluation (Shaw, 1975:60), and, in this sense, miss the point that migration may be more a function of perceived reality than of structural conditions (Mangalam and Schwarzweller, 1970). The ultimate effect may be an excessive emphasis in migration research on purposively rational behavior (Shaw, 1975:60).

Direct inquiries into reasons for move and choice of destination involve some risk: stated reasons may involve rationalization; people may offer socially acceptable reasons, not know why they moved, or they may be unable to give more than vague or general reasons (Lansing and Mueller, 1967:36; Jansen, 1969). Moreover, the move may be the end result of numerous reasons, each associated with different weights.

Additional problems are evident in the codification process. Most attempts at developing classification schemes have appeared to be ad hoc and tailored to particular migration surveys. As a result, classification schemes are frequently neither mutually exclusive nor exhaustive, they lack parsimony, or are so general as to provide little insight into motivations. In attempting to determine whether the reasons for the move in the current population reversal are different from those evidenced in past surveys of rural-urban and inter-metropolitan migrations, the present classification scheme has been tailored to existing schemes. The intent is to place the present research into the context of past research while providing direct insight into stimuli for migration to nonmetropolitan areas. While no prior surveys exist with which we can make precise comparisons, previous migration analyses are a point of reference against which the findings can be viewed.

Despite the shortcomings involved in directly analyzing reasons for migrating, reason analysis is "particularly applicable for human actions

which involve a conscious choice among alternatives . . ." (Rossi, 1955: 124). Inquiries into reasons offer the potential for providing useful and direct insights into causation. This is especially necessary in developing an understanding of the new migration stream and in exploring the possible long-term continuation of that trend.

Classification of Reasons

Various classification schemes have been used in migration surveys, and generally with similar results. Work-related factors predominate in reasons for migrating, most often accounting for 40 to 60 percent of the moves, and these proportions will be used as one baseline against which our results will be viewed. These proportions are generally viewed as sufficient evidence for the central role of employment factors in migration decisions. They may, however, be accountable in part by the types of migrants studied, or possibly by the predisposition toward assuming that employment and economic factors are the major determinants of migration. Insofar as much of this research base stems from rural-urban and inter-metropolitan migration, the presumed importance of economic motivations may be warranted.[6/]

This research employs a basic six-category scheme into which reasons for leaving the former residence and reasons for choosing the destination were combined. The scheme consists of the following categories:

1) Employment Related: includes all job transfers, moves for reasons of unemployment or underemployment, searches for new, better and different employment, higher wages, etc.

2) Ties to Area of Destination: includes responses indicating a desire to return to area of birth or of former residence, to an area with which the respondent was familiar, or in which he/she had friends or relatives, would be closer to friends or family, or had property.

3) Environmental "Push" Factors: includes all responses citing negative attributes of the previous residence, ranging from the quite general ("get away from the city," or, in the case of some of the nonmetro migrants, "get out of a small town"), to the very specific.

4) Environmental "Pull" Factors: responses were coded as "pull" if they specified some attractive feature of the place of destination, the important consideration being that the area of destination was the referrent--often in contrast to the previous residence.

5) Retirement: includes all who cited retirement as the main reason.

6) Other reasons: includes infrequently mentioned miscellaneous reasons such as health, divorce, marriage, schooling, as well as those who "just wanted to move."

Reasons for Leaving Former Residence

Data to be discussed in this section are based upon questions eliciting the "main" reason for leaving the place of origin.[7/] In presenting the distributions of reasons given by this sample of post-1970 inmigrant households, two comparisons are important. First, in order to permit an assessment of the uniqueness of the metro-migrants' reasons for leaving metropolitan areas, data are classified by migrant type, thus permitting a comparison of migrants from metropolitan areas with migrants from other nonmetropolitan areas. If urban "push" and rural "pull" factors are as important as they are hypothesized to be for the metro-nonmetro flow, such responses should be more frequent among the metro migrant sample. The second comparison involves a further specification of households so as to permit direct analysis of reasons for those persons for whom economic and labor mobility models are intended. We have used age of head of household to delineate the labor force age households in the sample.[8/] The results comparing the total sample with households in which the head is of working age (18-59) are presented in Table 1.

Looking first at data for the total metropolitan migrant sample, we see that for about 75 percent of the households, nonemployment reasons were cited (Table 1). The most frequently cited type of reason is a push factor in the prior residence. If we combine environmental push and pull

reasons and let them represent environmental amenities we see that for more than 40 percent of the households these were the most important reasons for migrating, in fact, much more important than employment-related reasons for moving (24.4%). In clear contrast, data for inmigrants from other nonmetropolitan counties show a substantial proportion (46.4%) reporting employment-related reasons for leaving their prior residence. For this sample, push and pull amenities account for only about 20 percent of the moves. The data further suggest that, for the metropolitan migrant stream, retirement is an important motivating factor, accounting for about 17 percent of the metro migrant moves. It is much less important for nonmetropolitan migrant moves, accounting for slightly less than 10 percent (9.7%).

[Table 1 about here]

In comparison with past surveys of reasons for moving, the total metro stream is quite different in its reason structure (Table 1), and quite different from the nonmetro stream. The data for the nonmetro origin stream is rather consistent with findings in previous surveys. In contrast to the nonmetro stream, the reason structure of the metro origin stream suggests that for the total flow, economic models are relatively inappropriate. Before any firm conclusions can be reached, though, about the utility of economic models in understanding the population turnaround, there is a need to restrict the analysis to that segment of the sample for which labor force models are suggested to apply--the population of labor force age. This segment of the samples is operationalized here as households in which the head is aged 18-59.

From the relative reduction in N's, we can see that the metro flow is much older than the nonmetro flow. Households with heads over 59 years

of age account for about 34 percent of the metro flow and for about 24 percent of the nonmetro flow (Table 1). However, even after restricting the analysis, we continue to find some retirees in both streams (4.2 and 1.9 percent respectively). Since the total reductions in N's are considerably greater than the number who stated they moved for retirement reasons in each subsample, we can conclude that each subsample (and especially the metro flow) contains a sizeable number of households in which the head is older than 60 years of age and which are not leaving their origin areas for retirement reasons. Perhaps they represent some stage of pre-retirement, moving to these areas in anticipation of retirement. Some, of course, may be retired but report other reasons for having left their areas of origin.

Restricting the analysis to respondents in households with heads 18-59 does indeed substantially alter the distributions of reasons (Table 1). Respondents in these households cite employment-related reasons more often than any other type of reason (34.6 percent). Push factors, also relatively important, were cited by 28.6 percent of these households. If we combine push and pull factors as we have done previously, to obtain a measure of the importance of "quality of life" reasons in moving decisions, we still see that over 43 percent of the households move essentially for these nonemployment types of reasons. Thus, the major underlying motivations of households migrating from metropolitan areas do not change dramatically when labor-force age is specified. The nonmetropolitan households' reasons, however, stand in clear contrast to those of metropolitan households. As was observed in the total sample, employment reasons predominate (56.4 percent).

We believe the evidence presented in Table 1 presents a convincing case that the metro-nonmetro stream, at least for the areas sampled, is characterized by migration decision-making on the basis of environmental and site characteristics or amenities, and not to a great extent on the basis of employment-related factors. It is particularly noteworthy that a further breakdown of households on the basis of age of household head does not affect this interpretation of the findings. It serves only to slightly diminish the relative importance of noneconomic criteria. Differences between metropolitan and nonmetropolitan migrants are considerable, with the latter migrants moving much more for the conventional employment reasons. In general, the findings are consistent with the argument the population turnaround is a function of the diminished attractiveness of urban areas and the increased attractiveness of rural areas, and that it is based more on environmental factors than on employment.

To provide more insight into the reasons metropolitan migrants gave for leaving, we present a further elaboration on the original six-category scheme. The original classifications have been retained, but with additional breakdowns to permit a closer examination of the importance of various reasons for leaving the metropolitan area of origin. In Table 2 it is possible to determine, first, the importance of any given reason in each migrant sample, and, second, the importance of any reason for the category under which it is subsumed. Within the general "employment-related" category, for example, responses indicating a move to look for work, or because other work had been located, were given by more than a third (35%) of those giving employment reasons. The second most

frequently cited employment reason was a job transfer (27.9 percent). Relatively few left to go into farming (11.1%) or to be closer to employment (11.1%).

[Table 2 about here]

Of particular interest in Table 2 are the distributions on the detailed environmental "push" and "pull" factors. Of all the respondents citing push reasons, almost half (48.5%) gave a general anti-urban response, such as "too many restrictions in the city," "wanted to get away from the city," or "got tired of the big city." Similarly, if an individual gave a pull reason it would most likely be a "pro-rural" response such as "wanted to live in an open area," "wanted the rural life," or "wanted to be in the country" (49.3%). Relatively few mentioned specific pull factors, and those who did, mentioned a wide variety of attractions in the destination area. Restricting the total sample to only those households with heads between 18 and 59, as we have done in Table 1, affects some of the gross category proportions, but it does not greatly affect the proportions reporting the various reasons within categories (Table 2).

Choice of Destination

Destination selection is certainly, for many, a multistage process involving a narrowing-down of alternatives. In this research, we are reporting on the last phase in the decision-making process, the actual choice of a particular destination. The data for analyzing reasons for choosing the place of destination are based on a response to a question asking why the respondent chose "this" particular place rather than any other place. The question is highly focused and is not intended to measure reasons for moving to a nonmetropolitan area in general, nor does it provide a basis from which to analyze the narrowing-down process. Data are displayed for the

total sample and separately for the 18-59 age group, by migrant type, in Table 3.

Using the same categorization scheme used in the analysis of reasons for leaving place of origin, we can see that the criteria employed in destination selection show a considerably different distribution than reasons for leaving the area of origin (Table 3). And there are differences by migrant type as well. Turning first to the distribution of reasons for the total samples of migrants, we see that, as was the case with reasons for leaving, employment reasons are much more evident among the inmigrants from other nonmetropolitan counties, and in fact employment is the modal response category for this migrant group (41.5 percent). For the metropolitan migrants, though, the modal response category is "ties to the area of destination" (45.4 percent). Ties, however, are also important for migrants from nonmetropolitan areas, accounting for about 31 percent of the responses. "Environmental pull" factors were the second most frequently mentioned category of reasons (27.7%) for all metropolitan migrants, and third (21.3%) for all nonmetropolitan.

[Table 3 about here]

Detailed data (not presented here) on choice of destination show that most (60%) of the migrants reporting employment reasons stated that they had been transferred or found a job in the place to which they moved. About 30 percent of those choosing "this place" because of ties to area of destination wanted to be "closer to friends or relatives," "had parents living there," or were "born and raised there" and simply wanted to return. An additional 23 percent of those reporting various ties as the reason for choosing the area of destination owned property in the area and gave that

as the specific reason, while the rest (about 15 percent) selected the destination on the basis of familiarity with the area, primarily familiarity gained through previous vacations in the area.

Restricting the analysis to households with heads aged 18-59 produced results similar to those observed when the distributions of reasons for leaving the former place of residence were analyzed. The overall importance of employment criteria in destination selection is increased, but subsample differences remain pronounced and consistent with the assertion that the metro-nonmetro stream is at variance with labor force migration models arising out of economically oriented conceptions of human behavior.

Further Evidence for the Motivations of Metro Migrants

The data presented so far support our initial supposition that metro-nonmetro migration is characterized by a motivational base at variance with much of the existing research on long-distance migration. In this portion of the analysis we attempt to provide additional support for the proposition that the nonmetropolitan population turnaround involves a substantial amount of decision-making on the basis of nonemployment factors. Since the evidence obtained here seems to be strikingly different from past migration research, and suggestive of a new basis for migration decision-making, we have attempted to specify some logically concomitant conditions which one could hypothesize would be associated with moving for nonemployment reasons. These conditions, if demonstrated, would provide yet additional support for, or against, our assertions.

First, we'll examine the relationship between reason for leaving the metropolitan area and size of place of residence prior to leaving. Our

hypothesis is that if disenchantment with life in large urban areas is one of the strong motivations for leaving, we should observe a relationship between reason for moving and size of previous place of residence. More specifically, those moving for nonemployment reasons should come disproportionately from the largest metropolitan places.

Our second hypothesized relationship is based on the assumption that the reason for leaving the metropolitan area of origin should be related to size of place of destination. Specifically, those wanting to "get away from big city life" or who "wanted country living" would be expected to tend to go to the smaller towns and villages. On the other hand, those moving for employment criteria, in order to maximize employment opportunities, would find the larger labor markets of bigger towns more attractive.

Finally, it is conceivable that, despite the considerable evidence supporting a quality-of-life perspective on migration as opposed to the more traditional employment view, those moving for nonemployment reasons may be just as likely to improve themselves economically as those moving for employment, even though this financial improvement is not explicit in their stated reasons. At issue here is whether those moving for environmental or quality-of-life types of reasons are more or less likely to have improved their incomes than those moving explicitly for jobs, better jobs, etc. Our reasoning is that those moving for a variety of nonemployment reasons, insofar as they're trying to maximize environmental amenities, would be less likely to improve themselves economically than those moving explicitly for employment reasons. Evidence in this direction would provide some support for the argument that moving for quality-of-life

reasons entails some "trade-offs" where amenities are maximized at the expense of income, and that the underlying motivation for moving was rooted in nonemployment considerations.

To simplify the analysis, we have combined several categories of the reason-for-leaving scheme. Environmental push and pull reasons have been combined into a single category which we refer to as "environmental influences." These seem best to represent the antithesis of employment reasons, which is retained as a separate category. The remaining types of reasons ("ties to areas of destination," "retirement," "other") have been placed in a residual category, which can also be viewed broadly as a set of nonemployment reasons. Thus, in the following analyses a three-category reason scheme will be used, and the analysis will be restricted to those metro migrant households with heads aged 18-59.

Reasons and Places of Origin

We have already seen that metropolitan migrants are more likely to have left their prior residences for nonemployment reasons than those moving from other nonmetropolitan environments. Presumably this difference reflects an association between size of place of origin and probability of moving for amenity reasons. Without introducing an extensive causal argument, we are simply raising the question of whether the metro migrants citing environmental influences on leaving have come disproportionately from the largest places in the metropolitan area. Data addressing this question are presented in Table 4.

[Table 4 about here]

The data show a bimodal distribution for our three-category scheme of size of place of origin. About 37 percent of all households came from

places in the metro area having less than 50,000, probably suburban or fringe communities, and only slightly less (35%) came from large cities of a quarter of a million or more. By and large, cross-classifying size of place of origin by reason for leaving yields the expected result. Nearly half (46.2%) of those who cited environmental influences as reasons for leaving come from the largest cities, compared with only 27 percent for those moving for employment reasons. The relationship, however, is not monotonic, and the pattern isn't as consistent as was expected.

Reasons and Destinations

At issue here is whether those moving for environmental influence reasons tend disproportionately to locate in smaller towns. Data presented in Table 5 test whether there is any evidence for systematic selection of places of destination consistent with employment and environmental reasons for leaving the prior residence. Existing migration research would lead us to expect those moving for job-related reasons to be most likely to choose places with larger more diversified labor markets, that is, larger towns. For all respondents, size of current place of residence refers to the town migrants identified with at the time of interview and in some cases may not be the household's first residence after the move. However, only about 22 percent report having lived in more than one home in the current county of residence since inmigration. For purposes of comparison, data in Table 5 also include the size-of-place distribution for all nonmetropolitan migrants.

[Table 5 about here]

At the time of the interview most metro migrants lived in small places--over 80 percent in or around towns of under 5000 (Table 5), in

contrast to the nonmetropolitan migrants who tend to locate in larger towns. Data from the cross tabulation of reason for leaving with size of current place of residence strongly support our hypothesis that those moving for environmental reasons are locating disproportionately in smaller towns. Of those citing environmental reasons, and the residual category which is also made up of a variety of nonemployment reasons, a majority located in places with less than a 1000 population. Only 28.7 percent of those moving for employment reasons are similarly located. Thus, we conclude that indeed those who moved for reasons not in line with economic labor mobilities theories, those looking to get away from "the city" or simply wanting "country life," are enacting to some extent those motivating criteria and are selecting the smaller nonmetropolitan places of destination.

Reasons and Household Income

The final question addresses the relationship between reasons for leaving and income changes. We have suggested that if households were truly motivated to move for nonemployment, and particularly environmental, considerations they might be more likely to experience an income loss after the move than those who were moving for employment reasons. Conceivably, some employment motivated moves may involve less income after move, and some environmentally motivated moves may involve improvements in income. We are only suggesting that there is a higher expectation that a lower post-move income would be found among those who cite nonemployment, and particularly environmental, reasons for moving. We report data on a question which asked respondents if their household income was

more, the same, or less in the year after the move, as compared to the year just before the move. Income change is displayed for the metro migrant group by reason for move in Table 6 as are marginals for nonmetro migrants.

[Table 6 about here]

The findings are somewhat mixed and only partially in the direction of our argument. For metro migrant households of labor force age, the modal response indicates no change in household income (46.3%), with slightly more than a quarter of the respondents each reporting more income and less income after the move. For the nonmetro migrant households, however, much migration was accompanied by either income declines (38.4%) or increases (37.1%). Income change, by reason for leaving among the metro migrants, is somewhat more clear. There is no evidence that those moving for nonemployment reasons show any greater likelihood of earning less after the move than those moving for any other set of reasons. The three categories of reasons for leaving have about the same proportion reporting that their incomes were less in the year following the move. However, those moving for nonemployment reasons are distinctly less likely to have earned more in the year after the move than in the year before. Almost 42% of those moving for employment reasons report more income, while only 22 percent and 15.9 percent of the other nonemployment categories, respectively, reported more income. Thus, in contrast to those moving for employment-related reasons, the others have generally experienced no major change in income in the nonmetropolitan residence.

Summary and Discussion

In summary, the data point strongly in the direction of a different motivational base underlying the new migration trend. The present findings for the metro migrants are in sharp contrast to the prevailing research on reasons for migrating, and in contrast to the findings reported for the nonmetro movers in the survey. The fact that we reach a similar conclusion even after limiting the analysis to that portion of the sample for which labor models of migration are assumed to be most applicable, suggests that at least for the inmigration metro-origin portion of the growth in nonmetropolitan areas,labor mobility models have limited utility. They do, however, seem to explain a large portion of the inmigration of migrants from other nonmetropolitan areas.

As others have argued, our data show that there are different explanations for the new metro-nonmetro stream: employment, retirement, amenities of more rural areas, and dissatisfaction with urban areas. By and large, though, the movement is rooted in nonemployment considerations. This is substantiated by our comparisons of reasons given for moving by the metro and nonmetro samples, for both the total sample and the portion of the sample composed of households with working-age heads. An attempt to validate the findings by examining some of the assumed logical concomitants of moving for environmental and employment-related reasons, provides additional evidence for arguing that the new migration to nonmetro areas is being generated by motivations different from those which have characterized long distance moves in the past. And, we might add, which are different from those characterizing the nonmetro-nonmetro migration stream currently.

To those who have been researching and speculating on the current population turnaround phenomenon, the present findings are more documentary than surprising. Despite distortions in the popular press, there has been in recent years a growing awareness among researchers that population turnaround in nonmetropolitan areas involves more than simply industrial decentralization, super-suburbanization or retirement migration. Of course, the underlying catalyst for recent trends may be the enhanced capacity of nonmetropolitan areas for employing new residents. However, our data suggest rather strongly that migrants, especially those leaving metropolitan areas, tend to view their behavior in the context of the relative merits of urban versus rural living.

For students of migration in general, our data suggest that traditional conceptualizations about motivations for migration are inadequate, at least for the inflow to our study counties from metropolitan areas. The presumption that migration stems from economically-based, rational evaluations and opportunities may in part explain why post-1970 population turnaround has occasionally been referred to as an "unanticipated" trend.

As always in reason analyses, there are problems with data derived from responses to questions asking why migrants moved or chose a particular destination. For some respondents several years have elapsed since the move and thus these respondents could easily have answered differently had they been queried immediately after the move. In addition, there is the possibility of rationalization. One cannot be sure that those not improving their income after moving are most likely to rationalize that they moved in order to find the "good" rural life. Further examination

of the reason data, in conjunction with more objective information, will be needed before we can discount the possibility that amenity-based responses are a function of rationalization or a desire to give socially acceptable responses. Specific interviewing guidelines, however, were designed to eliminate these factors as much as possible in this survey.

Footnotes

1. For extensive reviews of these explanations of migration, see: Shaw (1975); Ritchey (1976); and Greenwood (1975).
2. Exceptions include efforts at understanding migration among students (Tuckman, 1970) and the elderly (Wiseman, 1978; Rudzitis; 1978).
3. Particularly instructive in this regard is the lack of inclusion of noneconomic considerations in recent major reviews of migration research. Perhaps this results from their emphasis on labor mobility, but certainly it is true that relatively little research has been done on migration in relation to noneconomic factors, and what research there is, has demonstrated mixed results, at best (see, for example, Cebula and Veddar, 1973).
4. The renewal of population growth in less urbanized areas is not a peculiarly American phenomenon but seems fairly general in recent years in highly industrialized societies (Beale, 1976; Wardwell, 1976).
5. The average telephone coverage of households for the target counties was 82.5 percent in 1970. Only six counties, which accounted for less than 4 percent of the survey population, had phone coverage of less than 70 percent. Estimates by the Bureau of the Census indicate that national phone coverage has increased since 1970 and thus the 1970 phone coverage data may overestimate the potential for bias. Available data indicate that unlisted numbers are only a problem in large metropolitan areas and thus present virtually no source of bias in this study.

6. As Rossi (1955:123-132) suggests, the questions used in a "reason analysis" to a considerable extent determine the classification and distribution of respondents. That prior classifications show differences in proportions within a category may be due to numerous factors such as question design, classification rules, research design, and the changing realities of the social universe. Thus, differences between the distributions of reasons given in this study and other studies reflect numerous factors, and we could only speculate about the extent to which differences reflect changing or unique social conditions.
7. The main "reason for leaving" is constructed from two questions. The first elicited up to three self-reported reasons for leaving the place of origin. These were recorded verbatim. For those citing more than one reason, a subsequent question asked which the respondent felt to be the main reason. About 33 percent of migrants from metropolitan counties and 16 percent of those from nonmetropolitan counties cited multiple reasons for leaving, indicating that for the majority of these respondents, a single response was sufficient to describe the reason for leaving.
8. The choice of 59 years of age as an upper limit is arbitrary and indeed most economic models define labor force ages as 18-64. However, our analyses suggest a sizeable number of retirees in the 60-64 age range and we have chosen to limit the labor-force age range accordingly. As a result, our categorization represents an extremely conservative test of our proposition. Also, virtually no full-time students were interviewed and, thus, are not a concern here. Head of household status has arbitrarily been coded for males in households containing a married couple.

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Table 1. Reason for Leaving Previous Residence, by Migrant Type for Total Samples and for Households with Head Aged 18-59.

Type of reason	Total samples				Households with head aged 18-59			
	Metro migrants		Nonmetro migrants		Metro migrants		Nonmetro migrants	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1. Employment related	122	24.4	96	46.4[a]	115	34.6	90	56.6[a]
2. Ties to area of destination	37	7.4	27	13.0[a]	21	6.3	13	8.2
3. Environmental "push" factors	130	26.0	15	7.2[a]	95	28.6	15	9.4[a]
4. Environmental "pull" factors	71	14.2	25	12.1	50	15.1	17	10.7
5. Retirement	86	17.2	20	9.7[a]	14	4.2	3	1.9
6. Other reasons	54	10.8	24	11.6	37	11.2	21	13.2
No response	1	-	1	-	1	-	-	-
Total	500	100	208	100	332	100	159	100

[a] Observed metro-nonmetro difference greater than twice its standard error by difference of proportions test.

Table 2. Distributions of Detailed Reasons for Leaving for Metro Migrants, for Total Sample and for Households with Head Aged 18-59.

Type of reason	Total sample			Household heads aged 18-59		
	No.	Total distribution %	Distribution within type of reason %	No.	Total distribution %	Distribution within type of reason %
1. Employment Related:	122	24.4	100.0	115	34.6	100.0
A. Job transfer	34	6.8	27.9	33	9.9	28.7
B. Look for/located other employ.	42	8.4	34.4	41	12.3	35.7
C. Unemployed/underemployed	16	3.2	13.1	15	4.5	13.0
D. Went into farming	14	2.8	11.5	13	3.9	11.3
E. Moved closer to employment	14	2.8	11.5	12	3.6	10.4
F. Other employment related	2	.4	1.6	1	.3	.9
2. Ties to Area of Destination:	37	7.4	100.0	21	6.3	100.0
A. Closer to relatives/friends	13	2.6	35.1	6	1.8	28.6
B. Prior residence in area	16	3.2	43.3	10	3.0	47.6
C. Familiarity with area	0	0	0	0	0	0
D. Owned property in area	8	1.6	21.6	5	1.5	23.8
3. Environmental Push factors	130	26.0	100.0	95	28.6	100.0
A. General push factors	9	1.8	6.9	5	1.5	5.3
B. General push: anti-urban	63	12.6	48.5	47	14.2	49.5
C. Specific push factors:						
a. Crime/safety	14	2.8	10.8	9	2.7	9.5
b. Environmental quality	25	5.0	19.2	21	6.3	22.1
c. Cost of living	8	1.6	6.1	5	1.5	5.3
d. Other specific push	11	2.2	8.5	8	2.4	8.4
4. Environmental Pull Factors	71	14.2	100.0	50	15.1	100.0
A. General pull factors	10	2.0	14.1	6	1.8	12.0
B. General pull: pro-rural	35	7.0	49.3	26	7.8	52.0
C. Specific pull factors:						
a. Crime/safety	0	0	0	0	0	0
b. Environmental quality	1	.2	1.4	0	0	0
c. Cost of living	1	.2	1.4	1	.3	2.0
d. Other specific pull	24	4.8	33.8	17	5.1	34.0
5. Retirement	86	17.2	100.0	14	4.2	100.0
6. Other reasons	54	10.8	100.0	37	11.2	100.0

Table 3. Reason for Choosing Destination by Migrant Type for the Total Samples and for Households with Head Aged 18-59

Type of reason	Total samples				Household heads aged 18-59			
	Metro migrants		Nonmetro migrants		Metro migrants		Nonmetro migrants	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1. Employment related	105	21.0	86	41.5[a/]	101	30.3	80	50.3[a/]
2. Ties to area of destination	227	45.4	65	31.4[a/]	128	38.5	38	24.0[a/]
3. Environmental "push" factors	8	1.6	1	.5	5	1.5	1	.6
4. Environmental "pull" factors	141	28.2	44	21.3	87	26.1	37	20.1[a/]
5. Retirement	5	1.0	2	1.0	1	.3	0	0
6. Other reasons	14	2.8	9	4.3	11	3.3	8	5.0
No response	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
Total	500	100	208	100	333	100	159	100

[a/] Observed metro-nonmetro difference greater than twice its standard error by difference of proportions test.

Table 4. Population of City of Origin (1970) by Reason for Leaving, Metropolitan Migrant Households with Head Aged 18-59.

Reason for Leaving		Size of Place of Origin (1970) Under 50,000	50,000–250,000	250,000+	Total
All Households[a/]	(N)	119	91	113	323
	(%)	36.8	28.2	35.0	100
Employment	(N)	46	35	30	111
	(%)	41.5	31.5	27.0	100
Environmental influences	(N)	46	31	66	143
	(%)	32.1	21.7	46.2	100
All other reasons combined	(N)	27	25	17	69
	(%)	39.2	36.2	24.6	100

(Chi-square = 14.9, 4 d.f., $p<.01$)

[a/] Excludes 9 cases for which size of place of origin could not be coded.

Table 5. Population of Current Residence (1970) by Reason for Leaving for Metropolitan Migrant Households, and Marginals for Nonmetropolitan Migrant Households (Households with Head Aged 18-59)

Subsample and reason for leaving		Size of current place of residence (1970) Under 1000	1000-4999	5000+	Total
All metro migrant households[a]	(N)	152	113	65	330
	(%)	46.1	34.2	19.7	100
Employment	(N)	33	47	35	115
	(%)	28.7	40.9	30.4	100
Environmental influences	(N)	80	44	19	143
	(%)	55.9	30.8	13.3	100
All other reasons combined	(N)	39	22	11	72
	(%)	54.2	30.6	15.3	100
(Chi-square = 24.3, 4 d.f., $p<.01$)					
All nonmetro migrant households	(N)	56	56	47	159
	(%)	35.2[b]	35.2	29.6[b]	100

[a] Excludes 2 cases for which current place of residence population could not be coded.

[b] Metro-nonmetro difference greater than twice its standard error by difference of proportions test.

Table 6. Income Change at Time of Move by Reason for Leaving for Metropolitan Migrant Households, and Marginals for Nonmetropolitan Migrant Households (Households with Head Aged 18-59)

Subsample and reason for leaving		Direction of income change: More	Same	Less	Total
All metro migrant households[a/]	(N)	89	149	84	322
	(%)	27.6	46.3	26.1	100
Employment	(N)	47	33	32	112
	(%)	41.9	29.5	28.6	100
Environmental influences	(N)	31	74	36	141
	(%)	22.0	52.4	25.5	100
All other reasons combined	(N)	11	42	16	69
	(%)	15.9	60.9	23.2	100
(Chi-square = 25.1, 4d.f., $p<.01$)					
All nonmetro migrant households[b/]	(N)	56	37	58	151
	(%)	37.1[c/]	24.5[c/]	38.4[c/]	100

[a/] Excludes 10 refusals.
[b/] Excludes 8 refusals.
[c/] Metro-nonmetro difference greater than twice its standard error by difference of proportions test.

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